

Ludlow Recreation Committee  
Minutes of  
September 11, 2018

Present: Joe Gurdak, Susan Pollender, Heather Tucker, Leslie Boyle, Patty Rumrill, Nick Miele, Scott Murphy

Public: Marissa Selleck, Chris Perrino, Vanessa White, Bonnie Tucker

Call to order at 4:30pm by President Sue Pollender

Comments from citizens:

- Letters were received from Howard Paul, Jr. and Hannah Josselyn regarding the condition of Dorsey Park Field and a letter from Amelia Beardmore regarding the Summer Program. Letters attached. Scott will have Kevin fill in the hole at Dorsey.

Approval of Minutes:

- Heather moved to approve the minutes as printed. With a second from Leslie, minutes were approved.

Summer Program:

- The committee asked Venissa if she noticed any changes since the last discussion we had in July. She did say that the website was changed, t-shirts were made to include ASP. Communication did not improve. ASP has decided to move forward to look at other alternatives as she feels they are not a match with the Rec program any longer. She did check in with Zoe on a daily basis. Parents were talking to Venissa about bills instead of talking to Nick. She voiced her dissatisfaction of Nick asking businesses for sponsorship. What happened to the scholarship fund? Nick stated that there is no line in the budget for scholarships but feels that it should be put in the budget for next year along with paperwork for the parents to fill out to receive a scholarship. Ludlow Recreation is the only one in the state that cohorts with the ASP Program. Maybe each need to be a separate entity. Rec Programs can not get any subsidy from the government but ASP is able to. Nick stated that his camp director was hired late and it was tough not having a sense of direction - no mission statement or vision for summer camp. That would have been nice to have as a target to achieve. Nick will work on one for the future. He tried not to change too much from last year and kept costs down. The summer camp did break even this year. Using West Hill helped and they utilized Dorsey Park more. Some trips worked and some did not. He will change them up for next year. Chris Perrino asked if Mt Holly contributes to the scholarship fund or for the upkeep of the fields if their children are allowed to participate. Scott said they do not, the Mt Holly residents pay \$5 more than Ludlow residents for programs. Can Mt Holly help with town maintenance of fields? Nick talked to Craig Hutt Vatter and Craig would like the Rec

Dept. to use their facilities. Unfortunately the baseball field is not playable as it is overgrown and would cost approximately \$1200 to get it ready. The soccer goals are not the right size for the age group we service and would need to be replaced. Basketball court is a possibility. It was suggested that the town get West Hill up and running and have more communication from the Director's office. Nick is attending a VT Parks and Rec Meeting in October. This will allow him to network and see what other towns are doing, what kinds of activities and trips they plan. Nick will find out what is the interest of the kids we service and take trips based on interest. He is looking at maybe bringing the kids to the Gill Home for games with the residents, getting a lifeguard on staff so that they can utilize Plymouth Park more, coordinate with Chester and Springfield to have each town offer a special camp, i.e. baseball/softball, soccer, basketball to have all the area kids together to make camp numbers greater.

#### Director's Report:

- Sue asked Nick to send out the director's report one week prior to the scheduled meeting.
- Soccer sign ups are going well. 60 kids participating. Schedules are finalized. Moved some girls up the 5/6 team due to numbers. Trying to move some 2nd graders up to 3/4 team for boys. Nick is having to coach the 3/4 team - he has been asking parents to step up to coach and has had no success. This will limit his ability to referee if needed. A coach is needed for both the boys and girls 3/4 teams. The 5/6 teams are being taken care of by Jerry Tucker and Barry Martin.
- Dorsey Park - the sod did not take on top of the clay which made water pooling up. This has since been fixed. Bleachers were not removed. It was felt they could be repaired. This was done along with new paint. Will review the bleachers again for next season.
- It was asked if the varsity team can practice on Dorsey Park. Yes they can start on 9/12/18. The smaller kids will also use Dorsey towards the end of the high school schedule in October. They currently are on Pullinen field. Jamborees will be played at Dorsey.
- Tennis courts have been used heavily this season especially in the morning.
- Community Center floor has been repaired and is ready to go.
- HS gym will be ready on Sept. 29th.
- It was asked who maintains which fields. The Rec Director maintains the fields for Dorsey and Fletcher, which also includes cleaning bathrooms and trash removal. The school will maintain Pullinen Field. We will need to reevaluate this when the BR merger goes through. Scott is going to talk to Cavendish about financial help with Fletcher fields.
- West Hill: Scott wants Nick to get people up there again. Over 700 people attended the July 4th activities up there and there is a lot of interest to get it up and running again. They looked at the building to see if it is salvable. The bathrooms can be saved with minimal investment. Needs: new paint, new picnic tables - some were salvageable. This will be added into next year's budget. New nets on the basketball court were added along with some horseshoe pits for the 4th of July. Thinking of adding food trucks to next year's celebration. Possibly getting it ready for winter with ice skating and sledding.

Sponsors to get West Hill started? Funds need to be put in the budget, water needs to be swimmable. Can the path from Dorsey to West Hill be fixed and reused? Long term goals for West Hill: Scott to get estimates for the building and bathrooms, and cleaning up the water to make it usable.

- It was mentioned that a pool might be a good idea at Dorsey in place of the tennis courts which could move to West Hill.
- A subcommittee will be formed for West Hill Revitalization. One member of the Recreation Committee to head that committee.

Old Business:

- Dog Park meet with Cavendish about Fletcher Fields. \$240 in the Harris Fund for the Park. Fencing is the most cost. Sue to bring specs from Hartland - there are grants available for helping to fund this.
- Nick has the new website 90% finished. He is going to a sports online system for registration and payments. This will also act as the scheduler and send emails when games get cancelled or rescheduled. It will also contain directions for out of town fields.
- Leslie brought up that things were missing out of the Booster Booth at Dorsey. Scott and Nick to work on this.

New Business:

- None

Next Meeting:

- Tuesday, October 19, 2018 5:00pm at the Community Center.

Leslie moved to adjourn the meeting. With a second from Heather the meeting was adjourned at 5:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Rumrill  
Secretary

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Susan Pollender

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Leslie Boyle

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Heather Tucker

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Joe Gurdak

## Comment from Citizen

Howard Paul <ludlow\_rec@yahoo.com>

Fri 9/7/2018, 3:47 AM

To: Sue Pollender <weatheredyoke@comcast.net>; Leslie Boyle <leslieryanboyle@yahoo.com>;

Joe Gurdak <brsoftball86@gmail.com>; Patty Rumrill <phrumrill@hotmail.com>

Good Morning Sue. I have a few things I would like brought up under comments from citizens at your next meeting and unfortunately I wont be able to be there as I will be at my daughters soccer game. I am a resident of Ludlow and live at 14 Depot Street.

#1 - I was told that the Mountain Side House was no longer able to use the fitness center at the community center. I went in to talk to Nick about this and said they have been able to use it for years, they donated all the dumbbells and a weight bench as well as a pool/ping pong table. He responded with "well they can come get it then because its too crowded in here." The boys have always been supervised while in there and asking a non profit like the Mountain side house to buy individual memberships when the average stay is 2-3 weeks becomes costly. I also asked him on the first day of school why the PE classes were no longer able to use the fitness center when they purchased equipment for it and the fitness center was put in there for school use with community use during non school hours. His reply was rude in tone, "talk to Scott".

#2 - As you know Varsity Schedules are done several months in advance of a season and sometimes a year in advance. The girls first soccer game was scheduled for September 1, Home against Windsor. We had to play the game at Windsor because Nick hadnt lined the field and had done very little in the way of getting Dorsey ready for soccer. We played as the home team in Windsor, paid the referees and took a bus to the game. The only fans we had were parents, making it feel 100% like an away game. There is absolutely no excuse not to have the field ready for soccer season. All summer long he spent all day at the field getting it ready for every co-ed softball game but couldnt find time to do the same for the School. Joe Gurdak Set up, Lined and painted the School field in a weekend all by him self. Joe Also has to line Fletcher Fields every week because Nick wont. My point there is if Joe can do this by himself why isnt our recreation director able to do it. If he cant do it he could have asked for help. Dorsey was not lined until September 6th giving the girls one day to practice on the field before playing a game on it.

I dont like complaining about Nick, I like him as a person, like his family but his arrogance and laziness is having a negative effect on a lot of people. I work at the Mountainside House and am currently teaching phys ed so #1 effects me. I have had kids drop phys ed class because it was supposed to be individual fitness class in the fitness center and now thats not available. Both of my children are playing Varsity soccer and watching them play in a scrimmage and a game on a regulation size field we were clearly at a disadvantage because we have been forced to practice on short narrow fields. The bottom line is Ludlow deserves more of an effort then they are getting. You have a person on your Committee with a degree in recreation from Green Mountain College who could jump in and do a great job. (Leslie Boyle) The assistant Director from Springfield, Keith Eno would also be a great choice.

Thank you for listening

Howard Paul



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# Dorsey Park

Hannah Josselyn <hjosselyn20@gmail.com>

10:21 AM 

To

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Morning Mrs. Pollender,

I was given your email and was told to email with you anything I'd like to share about Dorsey park and the recreation department.

I grew up in Ludlow, I went to Black River and have had the privilege of playing on Dorsey Park! It's such an amazing, beautiful park not just the field but the playground and skate park. I hold it dear to my heart.

That being said I am saddened with the way that it's looking. My biggest concern as the assistant coach for the girls varsity soccer team is that our schedule has been out for months and yet we still had to play our first home game away at Windsor. Not only did we still have to pay the referees but we also had to take a bus which costs money. I feel that there was no excuse for the field not to be ready for our first game! And if I'm being completely honest I think the kids deserve so much more with their school closing down, the gym floor being done which doesn't allow them to play their basketball games Home or have gym classes in the gym and now Dorsey not being ready. It's just unfair to them.

Along with the field barely getting attention until the day before a tournament there is also a huge hole on the right side near the away fans bleachers that is definitely an ankle breaker. It's atleast 3-4 inches deep. There is also a few paint jobs around the park that looks poorly done. (I have attracted some photos) there is a lot of equipment left around. It hasn't been weedwacked around the away fans bench and the trail that fans use to get to the bleachers behind the clock hasn't been weedwacked and the grass is very high. The lines look like they were done wrong so they now have double white lines so you can't tell which ones the real one. I just feel like Dorsey hasn't gotten the love it deserves especially for being known for one of the most beautiful fields in Vermont.

I try and be respectful and don't like talking poorly about people but Nick Miele has seemed rude and standoffish when it comes to speaking with people and he seems to wait til the last minute to do things. Last night was our first practice on the field and he was working on the goal while we were practicing and doing a shooting drill.

Thank you for your time,

Hannah Josselyn

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To whom I may concern,

Let me start off by saying that since we have moved to the Ludlow area my two children look forward to Summer Rec. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same about this year. From the get-go there was a lot of miscommunication between the counselors and parents. Summer Rec flyers were left in the Ludlow Elementary School lobby as they are at the end of every year, except these brochures were for the Chester program. These advertised the same pricing as 2017 which included the sibling discount. Since there were NO brochures that advertised Ludlow's program I filled one out for each child and dropped them off on the first day of camp which included a check for that week. At the end of the day upon pickup I was informed that the price per week would be going up \$10 and they would be removing the sibling discount. This changed our weekly fee from \$120 to \$180. I then contacted Venissa White and expressed my concerns. She informed me I would need to contact Nick Miele as it was his decision to raise the cost. Upon speaking with Nick he explained to me he was unaware of what the summer budget was for the previous years and that they would be taking all the kids on some cool field trips that would require more money. I then explained to him as a single mother, a home owner & a tax payer in Ludlow I was very displeased with the increase in cost ONLY for Ludlow R.E.A.P. and that it was almost impossible/illegal for them not to have a profit and loss statement or some sort of budget in place from previous years. I suggested if he was concerned about costs to maybe set up a lemonade stand, car wash, bake sale or something else that the kids could also take part in and enjoy to raise the money. Nick got back to me the very next day and left me a voicemail letting me know he had spoken to the new Town Manager and that they both felt "no child shouldn't be able to attend camp because they can't afford it" and that the weekly fee would return to the original \$80/week with the sibling discount. Although this wasn't a case of not being able to afford it I was happy with the overall outcome and thanked him.

A week or so went by and I started noticing that every day when I would pick my children up they would be sitting in the corner of the gym sweating so bad they looked as if they had just gotten out of the shower. 80 to 90+ degree days and with anywhere from 20-30 kids in an enclosed gym with zero ventilation or air conditioning. There was maybe a cracked door tow two but just standing in there it felt as if you were melting. I packed them EVERY day with water bottles, snacks, sunscreen SPF50 and bug spray. They would tell me how they had nothing to eat that day at lunch because they didn't like what was on the menu. Never did I receive a call from anyone in charge telling me that daily my kids were not eating or I would have sent home lunch. Both of my children would come home on pool/sprinkler days with sunburn on their face and bodies. I asked my oldest if anyone helped them apply sunscreen to him or his younger sister and he said no, not even to double check they had done it correctly themselves. The field trips were mainly for young kids and not all ages like the ones they went on in 2017. One example was the Wonder Feet Kids Museum which don't get me wrong it is a very interesting place but

it is for kids Pre-K to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade which was not appealing to the older kids. I am the kind of parent who asks you how your day was as soon as you get in the vehicle. So many days I got un-happy responses. Whether it be because they were being bullied and told to "deal with it themselves" or because of the "mean counselors". I also started getting late payment or overdue balance slips 3 weeks in a row after hand delivering a bank check at the beginning of every week to which ever counselor that decided to hide in the office on their cellphone and play on social media that day. I went and spoke directly to Nick and told him he needed to double check his records because my account was paid current and my payment had made a hand-to-hand exchange. To this I got no response but a sly smile as he turned and walked back into the office. I also spoke with Zoe about the on-going issues with the counselors that seemed to have started while she was away. Zoe was very helpful and reassuring but unfortunately what happen next no parent wants to walk in on. I show up 30 minutes early without notifying anyone I would be doing an early pick up that day. I walked in to find all kids sitting on the black line while the counselors stood across from them and one specifically, Sidney, walked back and forth in-front of them screaming at the top of her lungs at them. When I was spotted the screaming came to a quick stop and both of my kids were told they could leave. I then asked Sidney if this was a military drill camp or a summer camp and explained I understood watching that many kids must be a challenge but if it wasn't a challenge that they were up to then they should seek other summer employment because camp is supposed to be a fun place where GOOD memories are made. No sooner did my conversation with Sidney end and Zoe walked out of the lunch room. I told Zoe that this behavior was beyond unacceptable to which she responded that she had heard the yelling from the back room and was on her way to address it and would be sitting all counselors down to talk about their behavior. We never returned after 7/13/18 nor did my children attend the rest of the summer as I was begged not to make them go back. I am fortunate enough to work for family so both children have joined me in my office while I work a 40 hour week.

No one is perfect and everyone has a bad day but children shouldn't feel afraid to go to summer camp. Children should not be left responsible for younger children, especially not that many at a time and those in charge should limit their screen time and keep an eye on the little people they are supposed to be watching. Counselors are supposed to make a comfortable, safe and happy environment for all kids. I know there are a few other parents who experienced similar things mainly reports of "mean counselors" so I do urge you to reach out to other families. It is a sad day when your child comes home afraid of those you have entrusted to care for them.

Sincerely,

Amelia Beardmore